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**Suggestions for a Course
in
International Relations**

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INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

At the last annual meeting of the Association, Dr. Stephen P. Duggan of the Institute of International Education made the suggestion that a course of study in International Relations might be outlined for use among the colleges holding membership in the Association. The Association voted to constitute President Shanklin, President Main and Dr. Kelly a committee to cooperate with the Institute of International Education in formulating such a course. The Association Committee is able now to present certain suggestions for this course drawn up by Miss Margaret C. Alexander, the Secretary, and to advise that the course itself will be issued by the Institute of International Education and will be available to members of the Association during the month of June.

WILLIAM ARNOLD SHANKLIN
JOHN H. T. MAIN
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SUGGESTIONS FOR A COURSE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

For the United States the war accomplished one positive result. It broke down, even though temporarily, the isolation which had characterized the nation's policy and habit of thought. The mountain whites in Kentucky learned that there was a France, and to their great surprise found that the ocean had to be crossed to reach it. The male citizen of draft age in the remotest hamlet in the country was exposed to a lesson in the interdependence of America and the rest of the world, which he can never quite forget. The same was true of the college student. Conscription either forced him out of college altogether, or the pressure of events compelled his attention to the world beyond the campus. To assist the student in taking an intelligent attitude towards the world situation, War Aims courses were introduced as a feature of the work of the Students Army Training Corps. The conditions of stress under which the courses were planned and conducted prescribed certain emphases which at a more normal time would be considered unscientific. The scope of the courses was limited, too, as their name indicates. But the universal introduction of a course in international relations had established an important precedent. Not that courses in international relations were a complete novelty. There had been sporadic attempts, particularly in our university summer sessions, to offer work in specific phases of the problem, such as American diplomacy, Latin American relations, and, of course, international law, which was a well-established branch of legal study. There had even been, before 1917, a few isolated endeavors to explain to college students the structure of modern society, the inevitable consequences of the anarchical conditions which prevail in our international relations and the necessity for well-considered

cooperation between nations. But a course would correlate modern history, economics, geography, international law and diplomacy, anthropology and social psychology, and in the light of these subjects, show up in their true significance the fundamental problems in the relations between nations, was for the most part unknown, and, unfortunately, remains so to this day.

In fact, with release from the pressure exerted by the war and the Peace Conference has come the distinct danger of a return to the excessively provincial attitude of mind which characterized our colleges before the war, except as such dramatic events as the Washington Conference compel the students' attention and direct it into international channels. An attempt has been made to break down this provincialism, by the organization of International Relations Clubs, groups of college and university students who are interested in a scientific study of international relations. That the idea meets a real need is shown by the fact that, with very little effort, clubs have been established in ninety-two of our American colleges or universities, with a membership ranging from twenty to one hundred. But when it is remembered that there are over seven hundred institutions of higher learning in the United States, it will be apparent that the club method of fostering an interest in international relations is quite inadequate. Nothing short of a regular place in the college curriculum will give the subject the attention due it. The work of the International Relations Clubs has been limited in its scope as well, as will be seen from running over the following list of topics which the clubs have had under discussion during the last two years:

Outline of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

The Past, Present and Future of the Monroe Doctrine.

The History of Russia from Earliest Times.

- The Russian Revolution.
- The Question of the Balkans.
- Modern Mexican History.
- Hispanic-American History.
- The Question of the Near East.
- China Under the Republic.
- The Baltic States.
- The Political and Economic Expansion of Japan.
- Limitation of Armament.
- Economic Conditions in Europe (1922).

Any one of these questions is important as illustrative of certain fundamental truths with respect to international relations, but no greater mistakes could be made than to concentrate on one or two particular problems and turn out experts on Latin-American affairs, the Far Eastern situation or the Balkan tangle in what purported to be a study of international relations. The student should be brought to recognize the common elements in each of these situations, whether they be conflicting nationalist claims, economic interest of one sort or another, or a combination of the two. They should be treated as effects, and the student set on the track of the common underlying causes of friction in each case: the lack of effective cooperation between nations. Without this a course in international relations will be inconclusive. The result of a lack of cooperation is war, and as war is, unfortunately, the recurring theme in international relations, a course would be inadequate which did not analyze scientifically the causes of war, political, economic and psychological, the nature of war and its consequences. Just as war is the inevitable result of international anarchy, so escape from war lies only in international law and order. Cooperation is the keynote to the solution of our international difficulties. This point cannot be overstressed—and because it is so important it is particularly essential that American students should study international relations, should be taught to think

of their country in relation to other countries, and should be compelled to question that traditional policy of isolation which precludes the possibility of effective cooperation.

The field of international relations is as wide as that of all human association, (for a nation is, after all, nothing more than an aggregate of human beings) and for that reason is exceedingly complex. The approaches to the subject are many, and none can justifiably be neglected. Yet in this, as in everything else, the teacher will be confronted with the necessity for choice and will be forced to adopt certain emphases. In many cases they will not coincide with those adopted in the following outline. The legalist will wish to stress the problem of international law, and international judiciary, arbitration and the Hague Conferences—and the importance and value of such study cannot be denied. But, in answer to the criticism of neglecting this aspect of the problem, it is affirmed that international relations is a problem in causation, and that it is of primary importance to focus attention on the conditions that produce international difficulties and to consider possible ways of removing those conditions. The machinery for dealing with disputes after they have arisen is merely one phase of the problem of international cooperation.

In planning the outline, one premise has been adopted, and that is, that war is an evil. For this reason no attempt has been made to include references to the arguments in support of the spiritual value of force and of the biological and sociological necessity of international conflict. If this should be considered an unwarranted assumption, in spite of the experience of the last eight years, the gap can easily be supplied by turning to the books, largely of German origin although the doctrine had its exponents in other countries as well,¹ in support of the argument, and to such refutations as are to be found in the

¹Bernhardi, von Moltke and Steinmetz in Germany; and Prof. Spenser, Wilkinson and Admiral Mahan in England and America.

works of the Russian sociologist Novicow, of Mr. Norman Angell and to the book "Social Progress and Darwinian Theory," by George W. Nasmyth. It has been further assumed, though history has established the point beyond shadow of doubt, that war is the inevitable consequence of the prevailing international anarchy. On the other hand, peace as an end in itself has not been admitted. The method has been rather that of inductive pacifism: first to study the nature of international relations and to find out what is wrong with them, and then to inquire into proposed remedies. Peace would be incidental to the remedies.

The scheme of study proposed is briefly this: First, the student should know certain important facts about the world he lives in. He should realize the conglomeration of races in the world, should understand the difference between a race and a nation; and should have a pretty clear idea of the coincidence or conflict of ethnic divisions with national boundaries; he should be familiar with the important changes, political, territorial and economic, resulting from the War. He should know to what extent these changes were made in an attempt to satisfy nationalist claims, or demands for strategic security, or the need for raw materials or markets. He should be familiar with the most recent facts about protectorates, concessions and mandates. Living in a highly industrialized world as he does, he should know something about the principal industries of the world, the economic resources of the industrial nations, and the trade relations of those countries with each other and with backward countries. This phase of the subject cannot be overemphasized. International relations is, after all, largely a study in geography: human geography, revealing the characteristics and manner of living of the races of the world; political geography, the territorial divisions of the world and the problems involved in maintaining these divisions; and economic and commercial geography,

the economic resources of the nations, their industries, and the interdependence of the nations in respect to these industries. The tremendous changes in the political and economic geography of the world as a result of the War have led to a whole new set of difficulties, which complicate what was already a very complex problem. New boundary lines, set up in the satisfaction of nationalist claims, have resulted in ruinous trade barriers; raw materials essential to the industries of a country have been transferred to a jealous neighbor; and new aspirations have been created which have their origin in economic distress and which will not be dismissed until that distress is alleviated. The Portorose Conference in November, 1921, was a beginning toward the amelioration of these conditions—but nothing far-reaching will be accomplished until the problem of the control and distribution of raw materials is tackled, for raw materials are the life blood of an industrial world. It is particularly important therefore that the student should know where the most important raw materials are located, who controls them, and what disposition is made of them. Map-making should be emphasized, in order that the student may get a mental picture, for example, of the location of coal and iron with respect to each other and to national boundaries and transportation routes and facilities. "It was not the death of a Grand Duke at Sarjevo or the invasion of Belgium, nor was it the ambitions of the German ruler or the Pan-German dreams of the German Junkers—it was not any one of these things that produced the war. It was a combination of all of them, colored by a desire to control the seats of production and the channels of transportation of all those products, like coal and oil and hemp and cotton and iron and steel and manganese, that are the foundations of the modern industrial world." This quotation from "The New World" by Dr. Isaiah Bowman, of the American Geographical Society, will indicate the main emphasis of the course. His book, "A Study in

"Political Geography," might well serve as a text for the first part of the course, which would require a whole semester if it were to be done with sufficient thoroughness to lay a solid foundation for the more contentious discussions to follow.

If the first part of the course has been successfully handled, it will have shown that the economic requirements of the modern world do not conform to its national divisions, and that in this fact lies the chief cause of international conflict. But the grave tendency to reduce the problem of war to such simple terms and to explain international action as the result of an exclusively economic motive is one to be avoided. So immensely complex a problem, in which there is a perpetual interplay of instinct and economic interest, of reason and emotion, of desire for material gain and idealistic motives, is one which needs very careful study. War plays so large and so devastating a part in international relations that closest attention should be given to all its causes, psychological and political as well as economic. This might be the content of the second part of the course. Competitive nationalism and economic imperialism would here come in for their due share of attention. Diplomatic methods and the armaments problem could be discussed in this connection as subsidiary causes as well as effects of the present international system. It should always be remembered in dealing with these particular problems that when nations begin to conduct their relations on a cooperative basis the need for secret treaties and alliances will disappear, as will the need for competitive armaments.

The latter part of the course should deal with the whole field of international cooperation. A brief summary of the attempts at cooperation in the past, which were largely judicial, should be included. Certain important experiments in international administration, such as the Danube Commission, should receive attention. Then,

from the body of war experience in international cooperation could be drawn many excellent examples of the kind of joint international activities (such as the allocation of raw materials, the control of "arenas of conflict" by international commissions, etc.) we shall have to look to in the future if we are to see established a smoothly functioning international system. The question of the machinery necessary in order to make this examination of the present League of Nations as an experiment in international organization might conclude the course.

As comprehensive a course as that outlined would require a year in which to cover the ground, and would presuppose a knowledge of modern European history, (at least from 1870 to date) and of recent United States history, showing the tendency of our own country to become a world power. Some preliminary work in economics and psychology would be a decided asset to the student taking the course.

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